

Built 1919 to 1926

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# County Building: 'Symphony in Stone'

By JOSEPHINE ZIMMERMAN

Utah County is one of the oldest counties in Utah.

On Jan. 31, 1831 in a general assembly, six counties were formed in the provisional State of Deseret, one of them being Utah County.

The county was named for the Ute Indians who inhabited the area, and Provo was established as its county seat.

At the time of its establishment, Utah County had been settled less than a year. Brigham Young sent 30 men from Salt Lake to Utah Valley to begin colonizing here. They arrived April 1, 1849.

Utah County's borders now encompass 1998 square miles, and the population is estimated to be 170,000.

The County Building, center of Utah County's governmental functions, as begun in 1919 and completed seven years later. Built to house both county and Provo City governments, the structure cost \$576,495 to complete.

The stately Utah County building as dedicated on Dec. 15, 1926. George H. Dern, then governor of Utah, said of the building: "Goethe said, Architecture is frozen music." The architect who designed the beautiful edifice which you are dedicating, has composed a great piece of music, a vertiable symphony in stone."

At its opening, the structure was known as the City and County Building, and housed the commissioners of both governmental agencies.

County officials who approved the plans and initiated the work were Hyrum F. Thomas, Joseph Reese, and R.D. Wadley. City commissioners were H.J.W. Goddard, Mayor LeRoy Dixon, and T.C. Thompson.

Commissioners who finished the work were A.O. Smoot, James T. Gardner, and Neil Dahle of the county; J. Elmer Jacobsen, Mayor O.K. Hansen, and Charles Hopkins of Provo City. Those who served during construction of the building were Fred Matley, Jesse M. Harmon, Charles H. Wright, and George P. Billings.

Designed by architect Joseph Nelson, the building is neoclassic in design. The souvenir program which accompanied its dedication relates that it follows the classical features of Greek buildings but is not really a copy of any building.

The column-caps and cornice are an adaptation from the Temple of Minerva, on the Acropolis at Athens. "The lower floor has been treated as the pedestal upon which have been placed the two upper floors which form the interior of the magnificent order. The whole is surmounted with a classic balustrade," the program states.

The pedestal, or ground

floor, is faced with granite from Little Cottonwood Canyon, and the steps are of granite the full width of the central pavilion. It is similar to that used in the Salt Lake LDS Temple.

The superstructure is of oolite stone from both the Mani and Ephraim quarries. The building has a nave running through the two main floors. This is carried on two orders superimposed. The lower corridor is modern Ionic; the upper is modified Italian Renaissance.

Floors of the main corridors are of Alaska marble-tile, laid with borders of gray Tennessee marble. The pilasters and wainscoting are all of Alaskan marble. The

round columns which carry the interior are scagliola (composition marble) slightly pink.

It is interesting to note that the building, when it was first completed, was heated with gas from Columbia Steel Corporation plant at Ironton. It was also "equipped with all necessary tools for cleaning, including a complete Tuec vacuum cleaner located in the basement and piped to all parts of the building."

When completed, it was furnished with "the best of walnut furniture" purchased for all of the rooms at a cost of \$52,000 for the county and \$16,000 for the city.

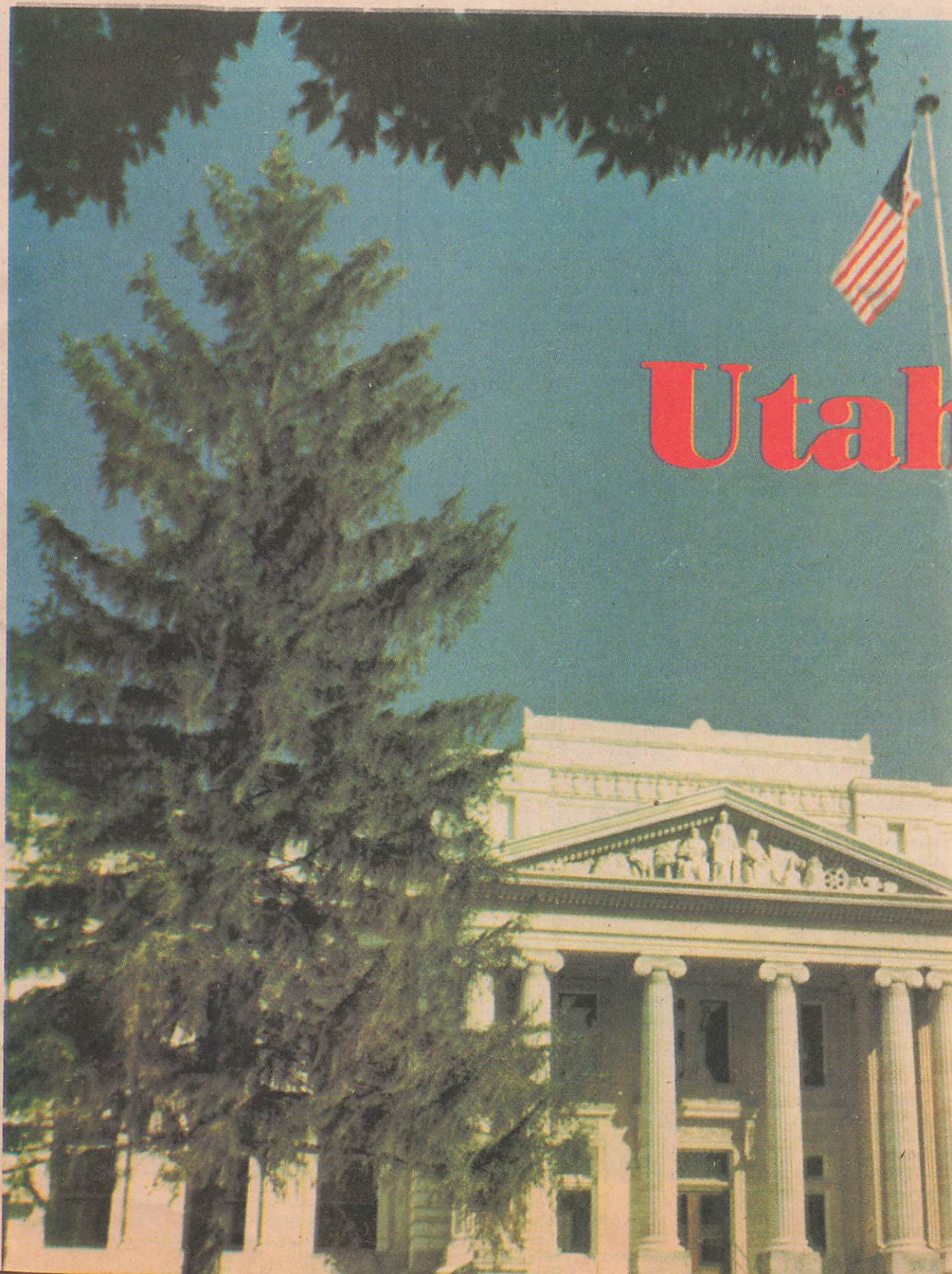


CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING, in photo printed in program for dedication Dec. 15, 1926. Note cannon on display in foreground. The building has undergone

extensive renovation since its construction, but exterior appearance basically is the same as originally.



**UTAH COUNTY — A Place**



**Utah**